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CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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U.S. and Mexico sign agreement to clean up 3.5 million waste tires along the Border *States commit to recycling used tires into useable materials*

SAN DIEGO – Federal and state agencies from the United States and Mexico met in San Diego at the International Tire Conference where California and Baja California signed the Tire Initiative Collaborative Effort to develop a market for waste tires and reduce tire piles along the border region.

“Collaboration is an essential component to solving this binational problem,” said Ellie Kanipe of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). “That’s what this signing ceremony signifies - collaboration and commitment to work together to enact the Tire Initiative.”

The Tire Initiative is a joint effort by the U.S. EPA, and the Mexican Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT). Both have been working to have all ten Border States sign the Tire Initiative which originated from the Border Governors Conference in September 2007 when the states recognized a need to address waste tires along the border.

This year’s Border Governor’s Conference: Building Green Economies, hosted by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, will address economic development and capitalization on green technologies, which will include addressing environmental challenges such as waste tires.

The Tire Initiative outlines principles and actions to establish a sustainable scrap tire management program, the cleanup and prevention of new tire piles, and the education of stakeholders.

California and Baja California are leading the way among the ten states to sign the Tire Initiative. Among those who signed include the Lic. Socrates Bastida Hernandez, Secretary of Environmental Protection of Baja California State Government and Ricardo Martinez, Assistant Secretary for Border Affairs for the California Environmental Protection Agency.

Eight other Border States will also sign the agreement at a later date including Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Furthermore, the U.S. Rubber Manufacturers Association (RMA) signed a similar letter of understanding. Since 2000, RMA has been a leading source of information and has worked to

develop tire markets along the border.

“California is committed to effectively managing waste tires, reducing greenhouse gases and developing a stronger relationship with our neighbors in Mexico,” said CIWMB Board Chair Margo Reid Brown. “It’s encouraging to see that together we can prevent the generation of waste tire piles using cost-effective and environmentally sound solutions.”

Although some Border States have created scrap tire management programs, there are millions of scrap tires still left in piles along the border and have created several health and environmental problems. Tire pile fires are a particular threat to California, as tire fires can burn for weeks, adversely affecting air quality and putting a significant strain on emergency and economic resources. Tire piles also serve as breeding ground for mosquitoes, rodents and other disease vectors. The West Nile virus, dengue fever and malaria have already been associated with tire piles.

In California, an estimated 42 million waste tires are generated each year. The State currently diverts 75 percent of those tires from going to landfills or tire disposal sites. Waste tires are now being diverted to make Rubberized Asphalt Concrete (RAC) on roads; crumb rubber playgrounds; landscape maintenance; Alternative Daily Cover for landfills; and for engineering purposes.

The U.S. EPA’s Border 2012 U.S.-Mexico Environmental Program protects the environment and public health for 10 states on both sides of the 2,000-mile border, including 26 U.S. tribes and seven groups of Mexican indigenous people. Border 2012 seeks to reduce pollution in water, air, and on land, reduce exposure to chemicals from accidental releases or terrorism, and improve environmental stewardship.

For information, visit:<http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/fora/forum-waste.html>

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